TO:       HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL
FROM:    CITY MANAGER    DEPARTMENT: PUBLIC WORKS
DATE:    AUGUST 2, 2004  CMR:364:04

SUBJECT: THE POLICY AND SERVICES COMMITTEE FORWARDS WITHOUT RECOMMENDATION THE DRAFT SCOPE OF SERVICES FOR AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES CENTER

RECOMMENDATION
The Policy and Services Committee is forwarding the issues related to scoping an environmental impact report (EIR) for an Environmental Service Center (Attachment 1 - CMR 176:04) to the full Council without making its own recommendation.

COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS
Staff met with the Policy and Services Committee (Committee) on May 19, 2004 to discuss the proposed Environmental Service Center (ESC). Staff recommendations included approval to continue the current solid waste programs in Palo Alto; approval to pursue the concept of a comprehensive ESC including environmental review; pursuing voter approval to change the land-use designation of the proposed area, permitting and advanced design of the facility; and approval of the draft scope of services for an EIR.

At the Committee meeting, two motions were proposed. The first motion changed the staff recommendation to the following:

Continue current programs for the time being to allow staff to come back with clear alternatives; approve the study of the concept of an ESC and return to Committee with environmental review and any land use designation changes; approve the initiation of an ESC design (a study without a commitment to size, etc); authorize staff to return with a scope of services for an EIR that includes active recreation uses, regional and interjurisdictional cooperation and a description/commitment to minimize the impact on parkland and delete the authorization for voter approval at this time.

A substitute motion was proposed as follows:

Approve staff’s recommendation with the following change: Delete the 19-acre ESC option.
The Committee voted on the main motion with Council members Burch and Morton voting yes. The substitute motion was voted on with the Council members Cordell and Kishimoto voting yes. Therefore, both motions failed and the staff recommendations are being forwarded to full Council for without a Committee recommendation.

Some of the issues/questions that were raised by committee members and the public at the May 19 Committee meeting are addressed below.

**Is Council being asked to approve construction of the project at this time?**
No. There are two main approvals that are necessary at this time. Council is being asked to approve the concept of the project in order to move forward with preparing an environmental impact report (EIR); to begin research on necessary permitting to change the “look” of the landfill and to approve the scope of services for an EIR to determine impacts to both existing and proposed uses of the site. Once the EIR is complete, staff will return to Council with further recommendations regarding the size of the facility and to request approval to put a measure on the ballot for land use designation changes. The EIR must be certified before Council can take an action to put the measure on the ballot.

**Has there been any consideration of other sites in the City?**
Staff has considered the Los Altos Treatment Plant (LATP) site, and has determined that it is too small for a full-sized ESC. The EIR will include an alternatives analysis that reviews potential alternate sites and configurations.

**Would this project use valuable infrastructure funds?**
If an ESC were to be constructed, it would use Refuse Enterprise Funds and not General Fund infrastructure dollars. Therefore, it would not interfere with the myriad of infrastructure projects already funded through the General Fund.

**Why hasn’t there been outreach to the public about this issue?**
There have been numerous public meetings to discuss the ESC, as noted below. Staff will continue to provide information regarding the project as it moves forward.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 15, 1998</td>
<td>Finance Committee approved draft scope of services for feasibility study and a report for design and construction of a recycling, composting, and transfer facility at Palo Alto Landfill (CMR:353:98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March/April 2001</td>
<td>Finance Committee approved budget submittal for ESC as a CIP (project 9701)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2001</td>
<td>Council approved Budget including ESC CIP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 17,2001</td>
<td>Staff met with Finance Committee to request moving forward with construction of ESC and selling LATP. Finance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Committee did not want LATP property sold and also requested staff meet with Parks & Recreation, Planning, and Public Arts Commissions for discussion of ESC.

July, 2002
Mitigated Negative Declaration prepared and issued for comments.

July 23, 2002
Staff met with Parks and Recreation Commission. Parks & Recreation questioned whether ESC would require voter approval.

August 8, 2002
Staff met with Planning Commission - Planning Commission also questioned whether ESC would require voter approval.

September 9, 2002
Staff met with Public Art Commission - Public Arts Commission didn't see any connection between their role and ESC project.

January 2004
Community Recycler (newsletter article) distributed in Palo Alto Weekly.

April 12, 2004
Study session with Council on - Staff made presentation to update Council on status of ESC project prior to Policy & Services meeting.

May 19, 2004
Staff met with Policy & Services Committee - Policy and Services were deadlocked 2-2 on motions.

*Explain the difference in using 19 acres versus the 6 acres.*
The 19-acre alternative includes the following, not included in the 6-acre alternative:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full composting facility</td>
<td>5.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bin storage area for PASCO</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inert solids storage area</td>
<td>2.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation facility</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roads, setbacks and landscaping</td>
<td>1.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL:</strong></td>
<td><strong>12.8</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the event that the 6-acre option is selected, another site would need to be found for bin storage and inert solids would need to be hauled directly to recycling facilities outside the City. This would result in additional expense to the City as City crews and City contractors utilize the existing facility. “Chip and ship” of yard trimmings would replace the compost operation and would result in approximately
a $380,000 annual loss to the solid waste program. Landfill rent to the General Fund of $1.2 million each year (for the 12.8 acres) would not be paid. Other ramifications of discontinuing composting in Palo Alto are outlined in the attached staff report.

*The scope of services for the EIR needs to include more information.*
The attached scope of services has been modified to more clearly outline issues described at the May 19 Committee meeting such as reviewing active recreation uses, regional and interjurisdictional cooperation, and minimizing the impact on parkland.

*More focus should be placed on waste reduction.*
Although it is difficult to measure the amount of waste avoided through waste reduction activities, waste reduction education is provided through the City’s recycling program. Some examples of waste reduction activities include:

- **Home composting education**
  On-going classes are available on how to compost at home and includes ability to purchase home composting bins at a reduced cost

- **Grasscycling**
  Promotes leaving grass clippings on the lawn after it is mowed

- **Recycling wizard**
  Provides education to school age children on waste reduction and recycling

- **Reusable diapers**
  Promotes using reusable diapers and diaper services

- **Living Simply campaign**
  Raised awareness of the relationship between purchasing habits and waste generation

- **Junk Mail Reduction Program**
  Provides means to reduce junk mail to the home

- **Citywide garage sales**
  Promotes reuse

- **Countywide campaigns**
  Such as “Paperless…it’s better for business” – Promotes electronics uses versus paper uses

- **Holiday campaigns**
  Promotes gift “experiences” versus material goods

- **Earth Day events**
  Promotes reusable packaging, reusable mugs versus paper cups, reusable transport packaging and many other educational articles.