RECOMMENDATION
Staff and the Architectural Review Board (ARB) recommend that the City Council approve the site and design review and design enhancement exception for 10 photovoltaic (PV) tracking arrays located at the front of the City’s Municipal Service Center (MSC) as part of the City of Palo Alto Utilities Photovoltaic Demonstration project based upon the findings and conditions in the Record of Land Use Action (Attachment A); and recommend approval of Design Option #2, the “pinwheel” option, as presented in project plans (Attachment H). The ARB also recommended staff meet with the Public Arts Commission to determine if funds might be available to add a public art component.

BACKGROUND
The project background and description can be found in Attachment C, as well as in the ARB February 2, 2006 staff report (Attachment D).

On December 5, 2005, the City Council reviewed the Planning and Transportation Commission’s (PTC) recommendation for denial, specifically for the 10 photovoltaic (PV) tracking arrays portion of the MSC photovoltaic demonstration project. At the Council meeting, staff also presented a reduced (5 photovoltaic tracking arrays) scale alternative of the project. The City Council, by a 6-3 vote, directed staff to return to the Architectural Review Board with the PV tracking array portion of the Photovoltaic Demonstration Project for ARB review and recommendation. The central issue for this project is the visual impact of the photovoltaic
facilities, specifically the PV tracking arrays, being located in front of the MSC site and near the more sensitive surrounding Baylands area. Therefore, the Council directed staff to return to the ARB to deal specifically with the issue design compatibility of the PV tracking arrays in this area and with the Baylands Master Plan. (CMR & summary minutes included in Attachment F and G respectively).

**BOARD REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

On February 2, 2006, the ARB heard the application for the MSC Photovoltaic Demonstration Project with the full and reduced scale alternative, as well as several design options as presented in the plans (Attachment H). The ARB recommended approval (3-1-0-1) of ten photovoltaic tracking arrays to be located in front of the City’s Municipal Service Center. Within the motion, was the recommendation for Design Option #2 (the “pinwheel” design) and direction for staff to approach the Public Arts Commission to determine if any public art money could be set aside for this project. The next Public Arts Commission meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 16, 2006. One Boardmember opposed the motion, noting overall support for the PV project in this location, but preferring Design Option #3 (the single axis multi-pole design).

There were 2 public speakers at the ARB public meeting, who expressed support of the full 10 PV tracking array alternatives (See Verbatim Minutes, Attachment E). Comment letters submitted to the ARB included one in opposition and one in support of the proposed project (See ARB staff report with letters attached, Attachment D).

Boardmembers expressed support of the visibility of this photovoltaic demonstration project, of all ten tracking arrays, and did not feel the location and design detracted from the Baylands. One Boardmember indicated that the MSC location does not fall within the purview of the Draft Baylands Guidelines. The opposing Boardmember preferred Design Option #3 as a perhaps less distracting to passing motorists, higher in energy yield, and with supporting structures more in scale with the existing context of the MSC buildings.

**RESOURCE IMPACT:**

The proposed project will be part of the Palo Alto Green Energy program, reducing costs to the City and participating residents and businesses in the program by increasing the availability of photovoltaic energy in the City. The City received a Department of Energy grant for $1.4 million dollars in the FY 2003 Energy and Water Appropriations Bill to install a variety of PV systems on City facilities. The City Utilities Department is providing $1.4 million dollars in matching funds, for a total project of $2.8 million dollars. Energy produced by all three-demonstration projects (312 kW for all three projects or approximately 604,500 kWh/year) will be utilized by the adjacent facilities as well as be available for use with the Utilities’ Green Energy Program. As a comparison, a typical single family home would install a 3 kW PV system to cover most, if not all of its typical energy use. The proposed project at the MSC would produce approximately 110 kW or 231,000 kWh/year. The visibility of the facilities at the MSC could be promotional when applying for additional photovoltaic grants in the future.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

This project is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act per Section 15303. The Department of Energy is the Lead Agency for the filing of an exclusion from the National Environmental Policy Act.
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CITY MANAGER APPROVAL:  
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ATTACHMENTS:
A. Record of Land Use Action
B. Baylands Design Guidelines & Comprehensive Plan Compliance
C. Background/Project Description/Zoning Compliance Table
E. Architectural Review Board excerpt verbatim minutes, February 2, 2006
F. December 5, 2005 City Manager’s Report 438:05
G. City Council excerpt minutes, December 5, 2005
H. Project Plans (City Council Members only) – *(Available for Public Review at the City Development Center)*

COURTESY COPIES:
Planning & Transportation Commission
Architectural Review Board
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Karen Bengard, Public Works
Holly Boyd, Public Works
David Arkin, Arkin Tilt Architects
Emily Renzel
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