TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL
FROM: CITY MANAGER
DEPARTMENT: PUBLIC WORKS
DATE: APRIL 17, 2006
SUBJECT: NEW HOME CONSTRUCTION GREEN BUILDING GUIDELINES AND CITY COLLABORATION WITH BUILD IT GREEN

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

DISCUSSION
The purpose of this report is to inform the City Council of New Home Construction Green Building Guidelines (Guidelines) being distributed and promoted by the City and the City’s collaborative efforts with Build It Green and other Bay Area cities and counties.

The purpose of the distribution and promotion of the Guidelines is to create awareness of the importance of building “green” and to provide a tool to assist homeowners, designers, architects and builders. The Guidelines are available at the Development Center and online. The Guidelines can help with the design and construction of homes that last longer, cost less to operate and are healthier to live in, which enhances the quality of life for residents and those of future generations. Use of these Guidelines will help Palo Alto with its goal of Zero Waste. The green measures in the Guidelines range from simple recommendations to more sophisticated strategies. Regardless of the level of knowledge about building green, the Guidelines contain resources, design ideas and advice that can be put to use today.

Included with the Guidelines is a Green Points Checklist and Calculator, a rating system that assesses the environmentally friendly or green attributes incorporated into the home. The Green Points Calculator is available online to assist with tracking the points earned with the various green features incorporated. A home is considered “green” if it earns 50 points or more, and meets the minimum points in the following categories: Community, Energy, Indoor Air Quality/Health, Resources, and Water. Applicants submitting plans to the Development Center are being encouraged to submit the Green Points Checklist with their plan set to the Planning Department to demonstrate the green attributes being incorporated into the home.

These Guidelines are a result of a collaborative effort with cities in nine Bay Area counties and Build It Green, of which the City of Palo Alto is a member. City staff opted to provide a customized version of the Guidelines to the Palo Alto community by incorporating information on Palo Alto’s commitment to environmental stewardship and programs and resources specific to Palo Alto. This custom information is included at the beginning of the Guidelines.
Build It Green is a nonprofit that partners public agencies, building industry professionals, and green building product manufacturers and suppliers with the mission of transforming the building industry so that buildings are remodeled and built using green practices and products. Build It Green is funded through the California Public Utilities Commission, public agency and private industry sponsorships and memberships, and building professional trainings and workshops.

Palo Alto and other Bay Area cities and counties are making these Guidelines available to their communities. Having all the cities and counties use the same Guidelines creates consistency in defining green building. There is a growing trend in real estate to promote green home features during resale. If a homeowner is interested in certifying their home green, a third party rater can provide that certification through Build It Green. Build It Green is also a resource for finding a Green Building professional and information about green building products at http://www.builditgreen.org/.

Hardcopy versions of the Guidelines and Green Points Checklist are available at the Development Center or online at the Department of Planning and Community Environment’s web page, http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/planning-community/.

**ATTACHMENT**

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