TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL
FROM: CITY MANAGER    DEPARTMENT: PUBLIC WORKS
DATE: JULY 11, 2005    CMR: 306:05
SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATION TO EXTEND THE DEADLINE ON DEVELOPMENT OF A ZERO WASTE POLICY UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends extending the timeline on presenting a proposed zero waste policy to Council to September/October 2005.

BACKGROUND
On November 15, 2004 as an outgrowth of the discussion on how to provide for Palo Alto’s future solid waste needs and programs during the discussion of the then-proposed Environmental Services Center (ESC) project, Council directed staff (CMR:470:04, Attachment A) to return to Council with a proposed policy for zero waste, including an implementation plan. It was originally estimated that such a process might be accomplished in six months and that the report could return to Council by mid 2005. During the past six months of work on the issue, the Zero Waste Task Force has concluded that additional time is needed in order to complete the study in a satisfactory manner, and therefore has requested an extension of time to the fall of 2005.

The Zero Waste International Alliance broadly defines zero waste as, philosophy and visionary goal that emulates natural cycles, where all outputs are simply an input for another process. It means designing and managing materials and products to conserve and recover all resources and not destroy or bury them, and eliminate discharges to land, water or air that do not contribute productively to natural systems or the economy.

Zero waste means setting the goal of diverting from landfill at least 90 percent of the waste generated by all sources, both business and residential. Zero waste is meant to reduce excess consumption, minimize unnecessary waste, encourage recycling to the maximum extent possible and ensure that products are made to be reused, repaired or recycled back into nature or the marketplace. Zero waste seeks to eliminate waste wherever possible.

DISCUSSION
The Creation of New Zero Waste Policies
On January 13, 2005, a task force of residents, businesses and City staff was formed to assist in the creation of a Zero Waste policy for Palo Alto. The Task Force is led by Bud Mission of Roche BioScience and Palo Alto resident Walt Hays.
The City hired Gary Liss and Associates (GLA) to help introduce the concept of zero waste to the Task Force, discussing the philosophy, current efforts in California and how to achieve zero waste goals. GLA is recognized as a world-renowned authority in creating zero waste plans for communities across the United States.

GLA was also hired by the City to create a strategic plan. The Strategic Plan will include a mission statement, goals, incentives and guiding principles. The strategic plan is being drafted from feedback received throughout the community. Public meetings have been held and community surveys were widely distributed to obtain feedback throughout the community. Participation has been encouraged through press releases, attending local business meetings, door to door visits with businesses, a zero waste web site (zerowaste@cityofpaloalto.org), Yahoo discussion group, newspaper ads, Community Recycler newsletter, Utility bill inserts, flyers (at local libraries, May Fete parade, City landfill), and the Recycling Center kiosk.

The final draft of the Zero Waste Strategic Plan created by the Zero Waste Task Force is planned to be complete by July 28, 2005. The next phase will include review by the City Attorney, City Manager, Planning and the Public Works Department. After this review, a policy and resolution will be presented to Council in September/October 2005.

**Implementation Plan**

The implementation plan will include a timeline for a Waste Generation Study (WGS) and an operational plan. The WGS will identify what type of materials and sources are being disposed from the community today. It will also help the City set priorities when looking at various solutions and alternatives. From these findings, staff will create an operational plan to target specific materials through various programs that will include source reduction, reuse, recycling and composting processes.

Staff has prepared a Request for Proposal (RFP) to obtain the services to conduct and prepare a WGS and an operational plan. In July 2005 the RFP is planned to be advertised and distributed to prospective bidders. In August 2005, bids would be opened and reviewed. In October 2005, staff is planning on returning to Council to recommend award of bid for the RFP. If Council gives the authority to proceed, staff will issue the appropriate notice to the selected bidder. Then staff would plan to return to Council in May 2006 with a finished operational plan requesting authority to proceed with the proposed plan.

**RESOURCE IMPACT**

Funds for the WGS and operational plan are included in the FY 2005-06 Refuse Fund Budget. Potential funds and staffing necessary to develop and implement zero waste programs and policies would be determined and identified in the preparation of a zero waste operational plan.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

These recommendations are consistent with existing policies.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A: CMR:470:04
Attachment B: Council minutes of November 15, 2004