TO:    HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

FROM:   CITY MANAGER
        DEPARTMENT:  PLANNING AND
                      COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT

DATE:   OCTOBER 17, 2005 CMR: 388:05

SUBJECT:   APPROVAL OF AMENDED CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN FOR
           THE CITY OF PALO ALTO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK
           GRANT (CDBG) PROGRAM

RECOMMENDATION:
Staff recommends the City Council amend the Citizen Participation Plan for the City of Palo Alto Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program (Attachment A) in order to modify the composition of the CDBG Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) from nine members to seven members.

BACKGROUND
HUD requires CDBG recipient agencies to prepare and implement a Citizen Participation Plan that provides adequate opportunity for citizens to participate in an advisory role in the planning, implementation and assessment of the CDBG program. The format and specific contents of the Citizen Participation Plan may be developed by each agency in accordance with general guidelines.

The Palo Alto CDBG Citizen Participation Plan calls for the establishment of a nine-member Citizens Advisory Committee. The CAC is advisory to staff on the expenditure of CDBG funds and the CDBG process. Committee members are appointed by the Mayor to serve a two-year term and may serve a maximum of two consecutive full terms.

DISCUSSION
Staff is proposing amending the existing Citizen Participation Plan to reduce the membership of the CAC from nine members to seven members. It has been difficult to recruit new members to the CAC despite staff recruitment efforts that have included advertisements, mailings, an informational City Manager’s Report to Council, a notice on the City’s CDBG website and telephone networking. Currently there are four vacancies on the committee; with the amended committee composition only two new members will need to be recruited for the 2006/2007 funding cycle. A seven-member committee is large enough to fully represent community needs and would be consistent with the size of most other appointed City bodies. In addition, having a smaller advisory committee should enable staff and the CAC to develop funding recommendations in a more efficient manner, reducing the amount of paperwork and meetings.
POLICY IMPLICATIONS
The proposed modification of the composition of the CAC is consistent with existing policy that encourages streamlining and reduction of inefficiencies.

FISCAL IMPACT
The change will result in savings of staff time and resources in the Department of Planning and Community Environment.

ATTACHMENT
Attachment A - Draft Amended Citizen Participation Plan

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DEPARTMENT HEAD REVIEW:  ______________________________________
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CITY MANAGER APPROVAL:  ______________________________________
FRANK BENEST
City Manager

cc:  CDBG Citizens Advisory Committee