TO:  HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

FROM:  CITY MANAGER  DEPARTMENT: PLANNING & COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT

DATE:  NOVEMBER 6, 2006  CMR: 401:06

SUBJECT:  1525 ARASTRADERO ROAD [06PLN-0045]: RECOMMENDATION FOR APPROVAL OF A REQUEST BY THE CITY OF PALO ALTO FOR A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT AND REZONING FOR A 13.27-ACRE PARCEL LOCATED WITHIN THE ARASTRADERO OPEN SPACE PRESERVE FROM OPEN SPACE/CONTROLLED DEVELOPMENT TO PUBLICLY OWNED CONSERVATION LAND AND FROM AN OPEN SPACE ZONE DESIGNATION TO A PUBLIC FACILITY ZONE DESIGNATION. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT: AN INITIAL STUDY HAS BEEN PREPARED AND A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION IS PROPOSED IN ACCORDANCE WITH CEQA GUIDELINES.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff and the Planning and Transportation Commission (Commission) recommend that the City Council adopt the mitigated negative declaration, approve a Resolution adopting a Comprehensive Plan amendment to “Publicly owned Conservation Land” (Attachment A) and adopt an Ordinance to rezone the 13.27-acre parcel to “PF” (Public Facilities) [Attachment B].

BACKGROUND

On September 12, 2005, Council approved the purchase of the 13.27-acre Arastradero Gateway property from the Peninsula Open Space Trust and the expenditure of funds from the Budget Stabilization Reserve Fund to finance its acquisition. The purchase of this property to expand open space and recreational opportunities was an objective of the City since 1978 when former mayor Byron Sher attempted to purchase the property from Mrs. Bressler. Numerous subsequent attempts were made to acquire the property from the Bressler family. In 2002, at the urging of the City of Palo Alto, the Peninsula Open Space Trust bought the property at a bankruptcy auction from the Bressler family with the intent of protecting it from development and providing the City of Palo Alto the opportunity to purchase the property. The purchase of the property from POST was finalized on September 31, 2005. On November 14, 2005, Council adopted an ordinance which dedicated the property as “park land” and as a part of the Arastradero Open Space Preserve, and directed staff to initiate a zone change for the property from an Open Space zone to a Public Facility (PF) zone, in conformance with the surrounding preserve. The specific
purpose of the PF zone district is to accommodate governmental, public utility, educational, and community service or recreational facilities.

**BOARD/COMMISSION REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS**
The Commission reviewed this project at its meeting of September 13, 2006. The Commission recommenced (6-0-1-0) that the Council adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration and approve the requested rezoning and land use designation of the property to Public Facility (PF) and publicly owned conservation land.

A draft City Council resolution to adopt the requested Comprehensive Plan change to “Publicly Owned Conservation Land” is included as Attachment A.

A draft City Council ordinance to adopt the requested change to Public Facilities (PF) zoning is included as Attachment B.

**RESOURCE IMPACT:**
The operation and maintenance of the property as park land would have a very slight impact on the Open Space operating budget and the workload of park rangers. The property is completely surrounded by the Enid Pearson Araztradero Preserve and can be easily monitored by rangers from adjoining trails and roads. The increase in operational costs to maintain and patrol the property is estimated at $2,000 annually and will be absorbed by the existing Open Space operating budget.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:**
The project is subject to environmental review under provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). An environmental impact assessment was prepared for the project and it has been determined that, with the implementation of mitigation measures, no potentially adverse impacts would result from the rezoning of the property. Therefore, the project would have a less than significant impact on the environment. The Negative Declaration was available for public review beginning August 23, 2006 through September 12, 2006, and is attached to this staff report (Attachment F).

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Director of Planning and Community Environment

CITY MANAGER APPROVAL:  
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City Manager
ATTACHMENTS
Attachment A: Resolution for Approval of Comprehensive Plan Amendment
Attachment B: Ordinance for Approval of Rezone to PF
Attachment C: Location Map
Attachment D: Planning and Transportation Commission (P&TC) staff report dated September 13, 2006 (without attachments).
Attachment E: Draft Minutes of P&TC meeting of September 13, 2006
Attachment F: Initial Study Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND)

COURTESY COPIES:
Greg Betts, Open Space Division Manager
William Fellman, Manager Real Property
Richard James, Director of Community Services